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Thesis

THE PLACE OF RECREATION IN CALVIN'S VIEW OF LIFE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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p5429

OUTLINE

I. Calvin's View of Life

A. Its origin

1. The influence of Calvin's heredity

a. Racial

b. Parental

2. The influence of Calvin's environment

a. Social

b. Educational

c. Religious

i) Contemporary Catholicism

ii) Encroaching Protestantism

3. The influence of Calvin's personal development

a. His early connection with the church

b. The effect of his father's trouble

c. His educational relationships in France

i) His humanistic tendencies

ii) His legal training

iii) His New Testament study in Paris

iv) His open break with the authorities after the Cop speech

III. The Place of Recreation in Calvin's View of Life, with a Contributing Background of Contemporaneous Recreational Life

A. Recreation for Calvin's contemporaries:
the unrestrained expression of human desire

B. Recreation for Calvin:
only such relaxations as were Scripturally justifiable

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis shall be to inquire into Calvin's view of life and to determine what importance he assigned to recreation as a part of life.

The method has necessarily been limited to research reading. The only original source material available to the writer was Calvin's own masterpiece, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion" and his catechism. These were read in English, not in the original. Aside from these only secondary sources have been consulted. While material was abundant so far as details of his life and work were concerned, it was extremely meagre in regard to his attitude toward recreation, and in regard to recreation of the sixteenth century in general.

As a result, it has been necessary at times to draw inferences from silences on certain matters. Wherever this has been done the successive steps in the deduction have been indicated.

For the purposes of this thesis recreation has been defined as follows: recreation is an activity or occupation so absorbing that it enables the individual to step out of the routine of life temporarily, and to gain, for the time being, relaxation or freedom from responsibility. This definition would require amplification if it were to include constructive and organized recreation. But such the Middle Ages did not have.(1)

Working on this understanding of the meaning of recreation

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(1) Bowen, W.P. and Mitchell, E.D. THE THEORY OF ORGANIZED PLAY, p.1

it will be shown how Calvin's idea of God determined his view of life and of recreation as a part of life.

CHAPTER I. CALVIN'S VIEW OF LIFE

I. Calvin's View of Life

A. Its origin

1. The influence of Calvin's heredity

a. Racial

Doumergue says,in the foreword to his biography of Calvin,that everything,however small,which entered into his existence,became an influence in the life of his spirit,heart and almost of his body.(1)

Calvin's body held no prominent place in his thinking.Nor does his heart seem greatly to have influenced his actions.To the spirit of the man,then,must be traced the secret of his tremendous influence,and formulative in this was his racial heredity.Some little inquiry into the place of his birth and the heritage he would derive from it becomes necessary,then, if one is to even partially understand his spirit.

John Calvin was born in Noyon,France,in 1509.This, however,does not begin to tell the story.Noyon lies in that section of France known as Picardy,"a country fertile in warriors and in servants of God".(2) Just as a roll-call of American heroes would include names of which one might justly be proud, so a roll-call of heroic men from Picardy would include such reformers as Le Fèvre,Olivetan,Roussel and Vatable,in addition to that of Calvin.Also many famous philosophers and revolutionary leaders claimed Picardy as their home.Thus it was a land where

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(1) Doumergue,E. JEAN CALVIN,LES HOMMES ET LES CHOSES DE SON TEMPS
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.22

the "reformatory ideas of the early sixteenth century could not fail to find response".(1) One feels no surprise,then,upon finding that Calvin exhibits throughout his life the characteristics of his race.Walker thus describes those characteristics:

> "Eager,controversial even to fanaticism, enthusiastic,dogmatic and persistent, they fought on all sides in the controversies by which France has been divided,but have never been lukewarm or indifferent.They are capable of producing men of leadership and ready to carry principles to logical conclusions" (2)

As will be shown later,Calvin's logic was not to be controverted. If one admitted his major premise one was inevitably carried to a conclusion which frequently proved highly distasteful.Nor can his persistent,dogmatic,enthusiastic fearlessness be questioned. It is repeatedly exhibited throughout his life and may in part be traced to his racial inheritance.

b.Parental

While Calvin's racial inheritance accounts in part for his indomitable spirit,his parental inheritance is fully as great in directing the conduct of his life.He came of a self-respecting,energetic,ambitious family,which was rising constantly in worldly importance during the latter half of the fifteenth century.His grandfather,while a boatman on the Oise River,became a cooper as well.His three sons inherited his ambitious spirit. Two went to Paris and one to Noyon.The latter,Gerard,later proved himself possessed of legal and administrative ability, and rendered public service of such a nature that he was

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.21
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.21

admitted to membership in the bourgeoisie of his adopted town in 1497. That he was a man of attractive personal qualities as well as of judgment and ability, is shown by the life-long friendship he established with the Mangest family, the most influential noble family of the region.[1] This friendship may, in turn, have helped his rise in the social scale and seems certainly to have helped the worldly career of his son, John.

Of John's mother, only a little is known. he was Jeanne LeFranc, the daughter of a member of the city council, a thoroughly fine woman and a devout Catholic. She was also famous for her beauty. Possibly it was from her that Calvin inherited that air of dignified distinction which is so noticeable a trait in the protrait of him shown as the frontispiece to volume one of Doumergue's biography. Her direct influence on her children was brief. She died before any of them reached maturity although the date of her death, like that of her marriage, is unknown.[2]

Even less is known of Gerard Calvin's second wife. We can assume that she was kind to her step-children and followed the religious practices of the time, from the fact that we have no records to the contrary. But more than this we cannot assume.

2. The influence of Calvin's environment

a. Social

It is in his social relationships that we begin to see Calvin's own personality. Mention has been made of the friendship existing between his father and the noble family of Mangest. This would naturally lead to certain kindnesses being shown to the

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.22-23
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.25

sons of Gerard Calvin by the head of the house of Mangest and to the association of the boys of both families. While this at first was due to the friendship of the heads of the families, it later was based on sincere regard for John himself. Of this we may be sure, since he alone, of the Calvin boys, was received on terms of real intimacy. Young John must have possessed rare personal charm to have won and held the regard of the three young noblemen of this family. That the friendship was a lasting one, we know. It endured not only through their school days in Noyon but through a university course as well. And when Calvin, later still, wrote his first book, it was dedicated to the friend of his boyhood days, Claude, son of one branch of the same family.(1)

Such a social relationship as this could not fail to be of great value to Calvin in later life. It would add much to his prestige and open to him doors which would have been closed, very likely, to an ordinary member of the bourgeoisie. It would also train him in the proper method of conducting himself after entering those doors. This feeling of ease in polite society would be of inestimable value in a social world where so wide a gulf existed between the manners of the common people (from whom Calvin had sprung) and of their superiors in the social scale.(2)

b. Educational

Calvin's early school days in Noyon were uneventful. But at the age of fourteen, a real educational opportunity presented itself. Partly through his father's ambition that his sons should occupy a higher position in the world than he, and partly

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.28
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.28-29

through the influence of his friends of the nobility, John was sent to the University of Paris. Although rather young to leave home, matters arranged themselves so that he would not be thrown too much upon his own resources at first. He was placed in charge of the same tutor who had been engaged for the boys of the house of Montmor and left in their company. He was to live at the home of his uncle in Paris and was to be educated for the priesthood. (1)

It might appear that the University of Paris was not the best possible place for the development of a broad or independent mental outlook. It had formerly been the finest seat of learning in all Europe but had recently begun to lag behind in the race for culture. At the time Calvin matriculated, it was distinctly mediaeval in outlook. It resisted quite stoutly all attempts to introduce the new humanistic learning. One wonders what it could offer a fourteen year old boy which would in any way assist in the production of a man like Calvin. The answer is to be found primarily in the influence of one personality - Mathurin Cordier. (2)

Cordier was a Latin master in the College de la Marche. Not only was he a Latin master - he was the Latin master in all France. Formerly a Catholic priest, he had been teaching here for ten years and was noted for true pedagogical insight. Contrary to the old adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child", Cordier spared the rod but did not spoil the child. He made friends of those in his classes. By his kindly attitude, he removed much of the mental - as well as physical - unpleasantness

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.31
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.32-33

connected with contemporary learning processes,and showed his pupils how to enjoy,as well as to interprete,their work.Not only did he thus help them to a real mental development,but he watched over and guided their moral development as well.His was a lovable nature and one of real piety.So great was his personal influence that Calvin's friendship for him never waned - nor his for Calvin. This again indicates the qualities of heart and mind inherent in young John.There,indeed,is such a mutual and lasting friendship between maturity and youth.(1)

After a brief stay in the classroom of Cordier, Calvin was transferred,on account of his rapid progress,to other masters.He received while in this same university such sound training in the use of Latin that his dialectic skill became of the first quality and was a great asset in all future lines of endeavor.(2)

About 1527 Calvin was ready for his distinctly vocational training.Upon entering the University of Paris he had been destined,according to his father's plans,for the priesthood. These plans were now changed and,since it was his father's expressed wish,Calvin went to the University of Orleans to receive a thorough legal training.Two reasons may be assigned for this of which the more important was probably the friction which had arisen between the church at Noyon and his father's attitude toward certain of its demands.This matter will receive a fuller discussion a little later.It is sufficient here to say that he left Paris and continued his education under de l'Estoile,the leading lawyer

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.21-35
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.36-38

of France,a learned man but conservative in thought and a strictly orthodox Catholic.(1)

c. Religious

i) Contemporary Catholicism

The religious influences surrounding Calvin's early life were strongly Catholic.He was baptised soon after birth in the parish church which was opposite his home.His god-father in this sacrament was a canon of the Noyon cathedral and a dignitary of the town.Throughout his early boyhood he frequented the various services of both the parish church and the cathedral and seems to have delighted in them.He was brought up,as all good Catholics were,to regard the pope as the supreme religious authority and the sole and infallible interpreter of Scripture;to look upon ecclesiastical devices such as confession,penance,indulgences, good works as a means of securing salvation,and other prevailing practices of the church,as essential to a religious life.Much of the chicanery of the church was either unknown to him or accepted by him (as by the majority) as part and parcel of the system by means of which alone one could be assured of salvation. The corruption permeating its every phase might be criticized or condoned,according to one's views and disposition,but could by no means be eradicated.To gain-say the pope was a sin and the pope and the system were mutually essential.These things were, then,fully accepted by him when he left his home for the university.

ii) Encroaching Protestantism

There were,however,other religious ideas mani-

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.44-47

festing themselves at this time besides those of the Catholic church. While echoes of them may have reached him in Noyon, Calvin was too young and too far removed from the center of activity to be greatly affected by them before reaching Paris. There, however, he heard much about them. In 1523, the year Calvin entered the university, Luther's religious influence was at its zenith. His ideas of personal piety; of individual reliance on one's conscience; properly educated; of a salvation which came to man as a free gift from a gracious God and not as a reward for "good works"; and of the absolute religious equality of everyone in God's sight, had been productive of tremendous upheavals in Germany. The fact that in spite of an open defiance of the pope, Luther, an excommunicated heretic, was finding a national-political protection, was known throughout Christendom. In addition to this his writings, through the agency of the recently invented printing press, were rapidly spreading. While disseminated mainly in Germany their influence was felt everywhere and their fundamental principles were provocative of discussion wherever they were promulgated. These matters inevitably came to the attention of Calvin, the student, and as inevitably became a part of his religious environment. Thus, along with the broadening of his mental horizon there came also a broadening of his religious horizon - a fairer, brighter, more logical outlook. The fact that he was not educated for the Catholic priesthood was due to his father's decision. But this decision may have been a very welcome one to the growing boy whose wonderfully able mind was beginning to think for itself and to realize its own powers.

3. The influence of Calvin's personal development

a. His early connection with the church

Dominant influences in the personal development of John Calvin were his early relationships with the church. Besides the usual connection between the obedient son of orthodox parents and the church which claimed their allegiance, there was, in Calvin's case, an even closer one.

Just before his twelfth birthday, young John was appointed to a chaplaincy in the cathedral. This appointment was due to his god-father's influence. It was purely a matter of economic expediency in order that Calvin senior might have the funds wherewith to meet the educational expenses of his son John. Such an arrangement gives evidence of the spoils system within the church and is indicative of ecclesiastical corruption. In this case, as in others, the youthful chaplain paid a meagre sum to a needy priest who performed the duties of the office, while the balance of the unearned salary went into the Calvin treasury. Later, while still a school boy, John was made a pastor and received an additional income. In spite of holding these offices, he was never ordained in the Catholic church. He seems, however, to have accepted the beliefs and practices of his church without question and to have raised no manner of objection when his father planned to have him educated for a churchly career.(1)

b. The effect of his father's trouble

Gerard Calvin's change in plan for his son's career came at the psychological moment: when John was on the threshold of his vocational training. Gerard's selection at this time of a

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.36

legal career for his son rather than a churchly one,was due to two things.First,he had come to realize that legal training was necessary for one who desired to receive any civil appointment from the king;and we have seen that Gerard was ambitious for the worldly success of his son.Second,because his own relations with the church had become distinctly unpleasant.That had brought about this unpleasantness we do not know.It may have been due to some,perhaps trifling,irregularity in connection with Gerard's handling of the trust funds of a deceased chaplain's estate. Apparently it was his duty to administer these funds.Apparently, also,an accounting was demanded,perhaps by a disagreeable superior in a disagreeable manner.Whatever he may have demanded, Gerard refused to comply.He was motivated,possibly,by pure stubbornness - a man who climbed even a little way in the social scale must have had a determined will.On the other hand,he may have been the victim of a petty persecution,based on personal dislike,in the absence of his friend,the bishop of Hangest.At all events,the trouble grew.In defying his superior ecclesiastical officer,Gerard defied the church in whose eyes defiance was the unpardonable sin.The matter ended with excommunication for Gerard. At the time of his death burial in consecrated ground was denied because of the excommunication and only the strong pleas of his sons,and John's influence with the house of Hangest,secured such burial.The fact that after his death the whole matter was readily adjusted by his sons shows that,per se,it was of no grave importance.(1)

It has been necessary to consider this matter in some detail because of its influence on the personal development

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.44-46

of John Calvin.He had spent some time in the stuffy scholastic almosphere of the University of Paris,with occasional breaths of freash,invigorating humanism.He had been,and still was,defraying the cost of his education with funds supplied by the Catholic church in patment for services which he had never performed.To be financially and thus - perhaps - morally bound to a church which had showed itself unjust,vindictive and capricious toward his father must have been galling to so proud a nature as Calvin's. It must also have provided food for much thought.A poignant personal experience like this,in combination with the external stimulus to thought provided by the Protestant movement,would go far toward alienating him from his mother church.A compelling human emotion plus a sound mental conviction,is the spark which has ignited many a world conflagration.Some how and some time during Calvin's youth,these two elements combined in him and provided the sine qua non by means of which he set his own particular world on fire.The effect of his father's trouble may have had much to do with the generation of this spark.

c. His educational relationships in France

i) His humanistic tendency

Attention has been called to the fact that the University of Paris was predominantly mediaeval in its scholarship at the time Calvin enrolled as a student.We have also seen that he was so fortunate as to become a pupil of Cordier's at the very beginning of his student days and that Cordier departed radically from accepted standards.He instilled in his pupils a love of the subject studied and made the process of learning a pleasant one.- both of which were departures from strictly scholastic methods.

After leaving the College de la Marche and the

influence of Cordier,Calvin was enrolled in the College de Montaigue.Here he made such rapid progress that he soon became a real master of Latin.This was a brilliant attainment for a boy of his age and pointed toward the possibility of eminent humanistic leadership.In addition to his mastery of this classic,he was thoroughly trained in logical reasoning and constructive thinking. Thus he would be able to make use of the content of the classical material.

Fortunately,a humanistic influence was brought to bear on Calvin even in this thoroughly scholastic college. This influence came from certain friends he made and from his membership in the "nation" of Picardy.

Conspicuous among Calvin's humanistic friends were Nicholas and Michel Cop,the sons of a physician on the faculty of the university.Through the friendship existing between this family and such men as Erasmus and Reuchlin,Calvin could not fail to come in touch with the best type of humanistic thought.An atmosphere of genuine intellectual interest pervaded the home of Dr.Cop and must also have pervaded the spirit of Calvin.So genuine a friendship as existed between him and the members of this family is necessarily based on certain fundamental similarities of interest. Another friend of his college days was Pierre Robert,familiarly known as Olivetan.Such authorities as Beza and Colladon think that Olivetan had already turned Calvin's interest from scholastic theology to humanistic study of the Scriptures before the end of his university course.If this were so,doubtless the change to a legal course was a welcome one.(1)

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.46

Another influence which would keep young Calvin from becoming steeped in scholasticism was his possible contact with the members of the "nation" of Picardy.This "nation" was composed of those in the university who claimed Picardy as their home.We know that there was a Picardy "nation" at the University of Paris.We know that its membership included some prominent students and instructors.We assume that Calvin belonged to it and therefore we infer that he came into contact with these prominent men.Thus by the contact of his mind with theirs,he would be prevented from a complacent acceptance of scholasticism even had his tendency been in that direction.

ii) His legal training

Calvin changed from a churchly career to a legal one at the desire of his father.To how great an extent his future success,and particularly his success in writing his famous "Institutes",was dependent upon this training,it would be impossible to say.Without doubt it enabled him to concentrate on those features of a situation which were of vital importance and to so marshall his facts that his arguments became cumulative in force.

Part of his law course was taken at the University of Bourges whither he was attracted by a famous Italian jurist. This man,Andrea Alciati,blazed a new trail in legal science as others of his day were blazing trails in natural science,in religion and in many allied fields.As Cordier and Wolmar had vitalized the study of Latin and Greek,so Alciati vitalized the study of Law.He showed that it need not be a matter of dry legal forms and arbitrary details but might be illumined and invigorated by illustrations from the fields of history and literature.He showed,too,that it was to be

interpreted in accord with great general principles.[1] This training helped Calvin in later years to formulate an ecclesiastical-civil constitution and to control the resulting state. Time and again it proved to be exactly the tool needed to help him build his religious structure. Time and again it was the redoubtable weapon with which he repelled attacks and defeated his enemies.

Another highly significant consequence of Calvin's stay at Orleans was his study of Greek. This he took up as a supplementary course to those he carried in the university. In some way he had attracted the attention of Melchior Wolmar, an eminent German scholar, whose love of the humanistic Greek and the Lutheran religion had made Paris an uncomfortable place for him to stay. It was he who introduced Calvin to Greek literature. A real friendship developed between the pupil and the teacher of Greek just as it had between the same pupil and the teacher of Latin. The knowledge of Greek thus acquired without doubt opened the way for Calvin to study the New Testament in the original.

iii) His New Testament study in Paris

Calvin, just at the close of his legal training, was called to Noyon for some reason and was detained there by his father's illness - an illness which was soon followed by his death. Within a month Calvin left Noyon and returned to Paris where he plunged into the study of the classics with a zeal which was typical of the disciples of the new learning. During Calvin's absence from the University of Paris, Francis I, influenced by Dr. Cop and others, established there a group of royal lecturers to instruct in Hebrew, Greek and Mathematics. One of these instructors was Vatable, from

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.51

Calvin's native Picardy.Such an opportunity as this made an instant appeal to Calvin with his strongly developed humanistic tendencies and his intellectual ability.(1)

Whether his conversion took place suddenly at this time or whether his further study of the Scriptures in Greek and Hebrew merely brought to a head a change begun long before,we do not know.Doumergue defends the view that Calvin's previous study had been accompanied by discussions of the content of the New Testament read in Greek with Volmar,and of Luther's writings as well.Further,he believes that such religious discussions must have inevitably made a profound impression on Calvin especially when considered in connection with his utterly logical mind.Thus when Calvin speaks of his conversion as "sudden",he fully realized for the first time the tremendous change which had gradually been taking place within him.(2) The fact of vital importance,however,is that at some time and in some way Calvin experienced an absolute change of religious conviction.We know that this change culminated in the year 1533 in Paris,at which time he was in sympathy with sentiments strongly Protestant,drawn from Protestant sources and evangelical in nature.(3) Nor is it surprising that the final change in view point came at just this time.Calvin himself says,in the preface to his commentary on the Psalms,that he was desirous of studying and attaining a knowledge of true piety and found many others who were also desirous of learning true doctrine.(4) Opportunity for gaining a knowledge of Protestant doctrine was not lacking in Paris in 1533.

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.53-55
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.76
(3) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.68
(4) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.72

Through his sister, Marguerite d'Angoulême, Francis I had secured Roussel, a disciple of Le Fèvre - both of them famous reformers from Picardy - to preach a series of lenten sermons. These resulted in a popular outbreak against mediaeval scholasticism.(1) It is justifiable to assume that Calvin heard and was influenced by these sermons. We know that he "had become a leader in evangelical or at least humanistically reformatory circles in the community in which he was".(2) It was because he was such a leader that events soon forced him to leave Paris.

iv) His open break with the authorities after the Cop speech

In the year 1533 Nicholas Cop was chosen rector of the University of Paris. This, of course, brought great satisfaction to his friend, John Calvin, as well as to himself. But the satisfaction of both was short lived. As was customary, the newly chosen rector delivered an address to the university. Remember that Cop had been reared in a home thoroughly permeated with the outspoken humanism of Erasmus and that he had studied Luther and the New Testament. Remember, also, that the University of Paris was still scholastic at heart even though the king had introduced a few humanistic lecturers. It will not be surprising then to find that Cop's rectorial address was provocative of much turmoil and dissension, and necessitated flight. The faculty of the university became violently partisan; the king declined to support the humanistic element when its views became so extreme as those Cop expressed; a reward of three hundred crowns was offered for the new rector, dead or alive; and while the speech was that of a courageous man, discretion counselled flight.(3)

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.67
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.76
(3) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.105-107

Calvin,too,came in for his share of the odium.The authorship of the speech was at first attributed to him. Scholarship now rejects this view but holds it as certain that he had a very sincere and vital interest in it.There must have been much consultation concerning it between the friends.Calvin must have known and apporved its contents and hence he received as much blame as Cop himself.The civil tumult following Cop's escape must have given Calvin real cause for alarm and he fled the city himself just barely in time to escape arrest.

Thus,from being an orthodox Catholic designed for a churchly career whose education was paid for out of unearned church funds,Calvin,within ten years,had become a leader in the Protestant type of thought.He had previously resigned the church position from which his funds were derived.Whether he had positively and completely broken with the church,we cannot be certain.It is possible that he - like Erasmus - still hoped for reform from within.However, within the next few years,upon the publication of his "Institutes", he took his rightful place as the outstanding Protestant leader of his generation.

B. Its formulation:"Institutes of the Christian Religion"

1. Occasion for the formulation

Calvin's greatest contribution to the literature of Protestantism was "The Institutes of the Christian Religion".It is true that various learned men,precedent to and contemporaneous with Calvin, leaders in the Reformation and able spokesmen in its defense,had written with skill and force in its behalf.But still it remained for Calvin to bring to the cause of Protestantism his unique gift of extraordinary organizing ability.It is this peculiarity which dis-

tinguishes his "Institutes" from all other apologia of the Reformation.

> "What the 'Institutes' did..... was to make the unseen government and authority of God, to whom all must bow, as visible to the intellectual eye of faith as the mechanism of the mediaeval church had been to the eye of sense." (1)

This was a vital need of the Protestant Church because its appeal was from the pope to God, i.e. from the seen to the unseen; therefore it was essential to faith and loyalty that the unseen be made real.

The "Institutes" were published at a time when Francis I of France was trying to arouse a public sentiment against the French Protestants by making political charges of anarchy against them. This was being done by means of lying pamphlets concerning them, issued not only with his sanction but at his behest for the double purpose of arousing French sentiment against them and of placating the powerful body of German Protestant princes, whose favor he desired to retain and which he was on the point of forfeiting because of these very persecutions. (2)

That the "Institutes" were published just when they were, was due to these pamphlets, to the persecutions countenanced by Francis, and to the scurrilous actions and derogatory motives attributed by him to various of the Protestant leaders. Calvin would have held them longer for more elaborate preparation, but the reasons mentioned above caused him to hasten their publication. (3) He, himself, tells us that his reasons for publishing just when he did were to vindicate those brethren whose death was precious in the sight of God, and to arouse sorrow and anxiety in foreign peoples, since the

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(1) Lindsay, Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION, vol.2, p.157
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.130
(3) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.131, 137

same danger threatened all.[1]

2. Its early form

In its early form the book was published in Basel in 1536 and was small enough to be carried in one's pocket - five hundred and nineteen pages. It was intended by Calvin to be mainly expository because, above all else, he felt himself to be an expounder of the word of God. He tells us "With this view I have composed the present treatise"[2] i.e. because, while the Scripture is the word of God and contains a perfect doctrine to which nothing can be added, still the average person requires direction and guidance as to what to look for in it. Therefore the "Institutes" contain an exposition of Protestant doctrine, carefully and calmly done and logically organized. It was the first entirely inclusive and inherently complete statement of Protestant faith, and while representing to a great degree the Lutheran viewpoint, it also contains the germ of the Calvinistic peculiarities which are to be observed more and more clearly in each successive edition.[3]

Besides meeting the need of the time for exposition and vindication, the "Institutes" in their early form were to serve as a basis of instruction. Therefore Calvin followed the accepted order of such instruction and the sequence of his topics is determined by the sequence of the instruction which every pupil was to memorize. Moreover, such an order gave him the added advantage of basing his arguments on certain documents accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike, as authoritative and absolute. In its early

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.131
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.129
(3) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.137-138

form the "Institutes" are composed of six chapters in the following order.

The first chapter treats of the Law of God as set forth in the Commandments. After an explanation of each commandment, the conclusion is drawn that this Law has three chief uses: to show what God rightly expects of us; to influence those who can be influenced by nothing except fear of punishment; and to furnish a rule whereby the faithful may learn the will of God.

The second chapter deals with faith as expressed in the Apostles' Creed. Calvin distinguishes here between faith as an intellectual assent to the historic truth of the Scriptures, and faith as a spiritual belief, based entirely on Christ as the Scriptures reveal him.

In the third chapter, he maintains that, as men have nothing good in themselves, they must depend upon God, and upon him alone, for all goodness. Hence, the need of prayer, the merit of which is not in him who prays, but in God who promises and fulfills. Such prayer is to be offered in the name of Christ only without the mediation of saints. After this follows an exposition of the Lord's Prayer as an example of what a true prayer should be.

Chapter four deals with the sacraments, which Calvin says are "external signs by which the Lord sets forth and attests his goodwill toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith".(1) Of the theological aspects of the sacraments we need say nothing here, but it is in this chapter that Calvin vigorously (although not vindictively) attacks the Roman method of administering the communion, as well as the theological belief concerning it.

Chapters five and six deal, respectively, with what Calvin

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.141

terms false Sacraments,such as penance,marriage,confirmation,etc., which are merely orders instituted by the Church and not by God; and with Christian Liberty,Ecclesiastical Power and Civil Administration. Here he becomes more denunciatory and directly attacks the Catholic Church,although with less venom than is shown in any of the later editions. Since these chapters contain the nucleus of a plan of action which might readily become,and eventually did become,a framework on which to build a new church constitution, they require some further consideration here.Calvin maintains that the only church officer recognized by the Scriptures is the preacher, who is also a teacher. Any man who feels called of God to this duty and privilege must receive the consent of the people whom he is to serve;whether that consent is signified by the votes of a representative few of the congregation,or of the city government,is merely a matter of circumstances.Further,he says that Christian Liberty consists in three things-in freedom which raises the Christian above the law as a test of obedience,although it will always remain for him a stimulating and admonishing influence;in freedom which causes the Christian to submit his conscience to the law, not because compelled to do so by the law,but voluntarily as an act of obedience to God;in freedom which permits the Christian the use of those gifts of God which are often called "indifferent things;i.e.the normal,simple enjoyments of everyday life. As regards civil government,Calvin stoutly defends the participation of Christians in it because it is divinely appointed as a means to reconcile persons to each other,to help them conform their conduct to civil justice,and to maintain peace. Moreover,the magistrates should certainly be Christians themselves,because one of their

chief duties is to be constantly on guard that no public offense against religion break out in the midst of the people.[1] This very brief resume gives some idea of the purpose,form and content of the earliest form of the "Institutes".

The latest edition was presented to the world in 1550 from a Genevan press.As Calvin had been constantly revising and rearranging his ideas during the intervening years,the latest edition most fully and most logically expresses them.We should,therefore,for the sake of more fully understanding the culmination of these ideals, viz.,the Genevan Church,inquire into their characteristics.

3. Its characteristics

Instead of basing his outline on the Commandments,the Creed,the Lord's Prayer and the Sacraments,with two additional chapters directed against the Roman Church,he divided his work into four instead of six sections,basing each one on a section of the Creed.There are certain knowledges which are necessary to man for his salvation and these are expounded fully and clearly in the four books.

Thus we find the first book is concerned with "the knowledge of God the Creator"[2] Preserver,and Governor of the universe and all in it;and of man as the creature of this creation.It deals first with the kind of knowledge of himself which God requires and where that knowledge may be found;with the kind of being God is,and the impiety of ascribing to him a visible form;with the reasonableness of worshipping God alone;and with the unity and distinction of the three persons of the Trinity.Next it considers the knowledge of man and under this head falls the creation of the world,and of good

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(1) The foregoing discussion of the early form of the "Institutes" is based largely on Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.137-148
(2) Calvin,John. INSTITUTES,vol.1, p.45

and bad angels,which pertain to man;it considers,also,the nature and powers of man himself.

The second book is concerned with "the knowledge of God, the Redeemer in Christ."(1) This knowledge is necessary because man has fallen by sin from the estate in which he was created and is incapable of conceiving even a good thought whereby to restore himself.The book shows the occasion of redemption to be the fall of Adam and the means of redemption to be Christ,manifested to the world by means of the Law and the Gospel.It shows that Christ,to fulfill the office of Mediator,must be God and man in one person; and,further,it shows the purpose of his mission to the world and the method by which he secured our salvation.

Christ separate from us is of no profit to us.Hence the third book treats of the Holy Spirit through whom we are united to Christ.This leads to a consideration of faith and its two benefits: free righteousness and regeneration through repentance.This,in turn, leads on to the subject of prayer:the principal exercise of faith and the channel through which we receive God's blessing.The book closes with a presentation of the doctrine of the divine Election and the Final Resurrection.

Book four,"On the External Means or Aids by which God calls us into Communion with Christ,and Retains us in it"(2) falls into three main divisions.The first is concerned with the distinguishing marks of the Church;with its government;with its power as related to articles of faith,to making of laws,and to ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and to its discipline,with mention of its uses and abuses.The second

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(1) Calvin,John. INSTITUTES,vol.1,p.220
(2) Calvin,John. INSTITUTES,vol.2,p.219

division includes the material which Calvin assigned to a fifth book when he drew up the first form of the "Institutes" and treats of the true sacraments,viz.:Baptism and the Lord's Supper,and of the five false sacraments as well.The third division deals with the civil government in general and with its respective branches.(1)

This is a brief summary of the complete formula necessary, from the Calvinistic view point,for the production of an ideal Christian community.To the production of such a community Calvin devoted his life,firm in the belief that he had been called to the task by God himself;firm in the belief,also,that in so doing he was seeking only God's glory,for he says himself:

> "It is characteristic of sound doctrine,given by Christ,that it tends to promote,not the glory of men,but the glory of God alone." (2)

C. Its culmination:the Genevan Church

1. Geneva in the time of Calvin's first appearance

The preceding discussion of the chief arguments presented by Calvin in his "Institutes" will give a general knowledge of the ideals he strove to incorporate in the constitution of his Christian city,to the building and maintenance of which he devoted his life. The ideals expressed in the "Institutes"would thus become his building plan,the specifications from which he worked.But no structure can be reared unless one has building materials as well as a working plan.Therefore,to understand Calvin's structure,we must be informed as to what materials he found to work with in his chosen city of Geneva.For this purpose it will be necessary to consider briefly the Geneva which Calvin found on his arrival in 1536.

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(1) The foregoing summary taken from
Calvin,John. INSTITUTES,vol.1,p.41-46; 220-221; 483-484; vol.2,p.219-220
(2) Calvin,John. INSTITUTES,Dedication,p.27

Somewhat cut off from the rest of the world by the Jural Mountains and the Alps,Geneva stands on the edge of one of the loveliest lakes in Switzerland.In fact,not content with merely standing on the shore of the lake it took a few tentative steps out into the headwaters of the Rhone,and built many of its gaily decorated houses on wooden piles above the river.(1) This is somewhat typical of the spirit of those who lived in these and the other houses of the city:ready to venture greatly and willing to be different from the rest of the world if that difference were in line with their own desires and convictions.

For five hundred years preceding Calvin's arrival,these desires had centered on the possession of liberty,and had been the cause of never-ending strife and warfarebetween the people and their dual government.For there were two exacting authoritites in Geneva:the counts who served as stewards for the Emperor and who were later displaced by powerful nobles - such as the House of Savoy - who proved most undesirable neighbors;and the bishops who represented the Roman Church.Both were grasping,exacting,tyrannous. The residents of Geneva were forever balancing the powers,one against the other,and making an alliance with that one which,they felt, would best serve their present interests.(2) In 1387,through the good offices of a highly honored bishop,the town received certain rights, among them that of forming a body of free Burghers with a voice in the government.(3) But still the struggle to free themselves from the vexations and the taxations of their political life continued until,

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(1) Bradfield,B. LITTLE BOOK OF GENEVA,p.13
(2) Bradfield,B. LITTLE BOOK OF GENEVA,p.7
(3) Lindsay,Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION,vol.2,p.61

when the pressure became too great,the Genevese called upon Bern and other free Swiss Cantons for aid.Through the assistance thus secured, the Duke of Savoy was forced to sign a "hands off" agreement and the city began to enjoy an increasing independence.During this period Europe had descended at various times into several tremendous maelstroms,viz.,the Roman and barbarian invasions,and Charlemagne's far-reaching conquests.While the shores of the little Genevan community were not very thickly strewn with spindrift from the currents thus created,this by no means signified any lack of activity or progress within the community itself.A love of liberty had always been its dominating characteristic.During the stirring years of the fourteenth,fifteenth,and early sixteenth centuries,although Geneva produced no noted architects or sculptors,geographical explorers nor commercial pioneers,she bravely held to every advantage she gained in her progress toward freedom.Thus she developed an ideal of city government and her determination to realize that ideal produced,in 1533,the Republic of Geneva.

This was the political situation when Calvin reached the city.There would,however,have been no occasion for his having remained there had the political struggle been the only one.But the fuse of a desire for a religious awakening and a freedom from certain corrupt practices of the Catholic Church,had been ignited by William Farel,an itinerant Protestant evangelist,in 1532.Farel,who had been forced after a short time to flee to Lausanne for safety's sake,had been succeeded in his work in Geneva by a young French instructor by the name of Froment.To him belongs the credit of forming the nucleus of a Genevan Protestant congregation in a city almost wholly Catholic.He advertised widely that "he would teach

reading and writing in one month, to all comers, young and old, without fee."[1] Since he taught those who came to him to read the Bible, the result was the same as it had been in other places where a return had been made to this source: that is, the people found religious life teachings which harmonized with their desire for religious freedom and which gave a basis for opposing the restrictions under which the Catholic Church had placed them. To strength the Protestant position, Farel, who had returned to the city, called a conference, or public debate, at which representatives of each faith were to expound their theologies. Even then the Catholic cause might have won had it presented a convincing argument. But the clergy were ignorant and thoroughly inefficient. Even the Dominicans, who had the best claim to learning of any of the Catholic orders, begged to be excused from sending representatives to the debate on the ground that they had none who were sufficiently learned in theology and skillful in debate to match the Protestant leaders.[2] Thus the Protestant forces scored heavily; the Catholic clergy headed by the Bishop and a procession of monks and nuns left the city, never to return; Protestantism became a legally tolerated religion; Mass was abolished and the preaching of the Gospel authorized in St. Germain's Church.[3] The city of Geneva was lost to the Catholic Church much as ancient Jericho was lost to the Canaanites: amid much tumult but little real defense, the walls of the citadel fell and the hireling fled (or capitulated) because he was an hireling.

Thus the religious changes in Geneva came about contemporaneously with the last stages of the political struggle and were partially the cause of it.

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(1) Bradfield, E. LITTLE BOOK OF GENEVA, p.14
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.174
(3) Bradfield, E. LITTLE BOOK OF GENEVA, p.14

As for the social life of the city,the people were the same as people everywhere:the good and the bad;the serious-minded and the frivolously-inclined;many who were outstanding heroes and a majority who were fond of street fairs,dramatic performances,(1) and a laxity and excess in matters of morality which put a frown on the brow and a weight on the heart of young Calvin.

2. Calvin's Genevan experience

a. His first call

A casual observer might call it chance that war between Charles V of Germany and Francis I of France blocked the direct route from Italy to Basel.Calvin,however,would undoubtedly have considered it part of God's plan for his life that,in order to avoid the disturbed area in making this trip,he was forced to go by way of Geneva.He arrived there in July,1536,intending to remain merely overnight,but news of his presence at once reached Farel. The latter proved himself to be a man of genuine self-discernment and unselfish devotion to the cause of Protestantism.While unexcelled as a leader in a hard skirmish,full of enthusiasm for his cause and with no thought of personal safety,he was not adequate to conduct a sustained endeavor for righteousness in a city where such disorganized conditions existed.He realized that Calvin abounded in the qualities needed.He determined,therefore,that the cause of Protestantism,as well as the need of the city for a renaissance of morality,demanded Calvin's guiding hand,and called that night at his lodgings.(2)

The latter,however,had other plans for his life.To excuse himself,he urged his overwhelming desire for solitude in

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(1) Bradfield,B. LITTLE BOOK OF GENEVA, p.13
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.181

which to study and write;and the fact that "his extreme natural shyness made him useless for such a work."[1] No argument of Farel's proved availing until he threatened to call down the curse of God on all Calvin's plans for study if he deliberately refused this opportunity for service.Thus it was that Calvin's first call came to him and he began his work in Geneva in the fall of 1536.He was enrolled as Professor of Sacred Letters in the church of Geneva, and did no preaching for fully a year.As has been said,he felt himself pre-eminently an expounder of the word of God,and he began his work in Geneva by an exposition of the Pauline epistles.[2]

b. His first reforms

Farel had made only a beginning in Geneva along the constructive lines which he wished to follow.Much remained to be done.The Genevan church lacked all organization except that the city government favored Protestantism,supported Protestant preachers, and exercised an ecclesiastical control over Genevan territories. It had no creed,no separate church discipline,no existence,even, independent of the will of the civil rulers.As Calvin's influence gradually made itself felt in city affairs,he was able to take increasingly vigorous measures to offset these things.Moreover,he was becoming better known to other Protestant leaders in southern and central Switzerland.The favorable impression which he made at Lausanne and Bern whither he had gone,merely as a listener,to attend religious conferences,also gave weight to his opinion on matters affecting Geneva.[3]

His first step was directed toward organization within the church.He prepared the "Catechism for Christian Instruction" and

(1) Moeller,Wilhelm. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,p.177
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.182
(3) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.180-182

"The Confession of Faith" for the entire Genevan church. Embodied in these were, of course, many principles found in the "Institutes". In his "articles" were certain other features dealing more directly with the system of government which it was his purpose to establish. The records of the Little Council of Geneva indicate that the actual presentation of these articles was made by Farel, but both thoughts and language mark them as indubitably Calvinistic. The dominating thought of these writings, called "The Articles of January 1537, Concerning Church Organization", is religious. Calvin strongly advocated a weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, after the people had learned fully to appreciate it. At present, he directed a monthly observance. This was always the central feature of his religious programme and to enhance its spiritual value and to add to its dignity and meaning was always his purpose. It was for this reason that he upheld the right of the church to exclude from participation in this sacrament all persons shown to be unworthy.(1) To secure within the church a body of persons conducting themselves in accord with sound spiritual belief and moral principles, Calvin presented three recommendations to the government. First, that they appoint men of integrity and uprightness, called syndics, to supervise the conduct of citizens, each in his appointed section of the city. If a syndic observed any person within his district who was noteriously at fault, it was to be reported to one of the ministers, whose duty it should be to bring the culprit to a state of repentance, if possible. If he could not, there should be a public effort made. If the wayward citizen still persisted in his waywardness, he should be excommunicated from the company of believers. If he merely laughed at excommunication, it would then become a matter for the civil government,

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.184-186

which should determine what punishment would best fit such conduct. Thus persistent sin of any nature became a crime in Calvin's system.[1]

Calvin's second recommendation to the civil powers was a logical outcome of the first. He argued that, if the church ought not to retain within its membership those who, while agreeing in faith yet fell from grace, how much less should it retain those who held contrary religious views. Therefore, he desired a city ordinance requiring from all residents of the city a public confession of their faith in order that "it may be understood who of them agree with the gospel and who love the kingdom of the pope more than the kingdom of Jesus Christ."[2] In order to show the citizens just what was expected of them he suggested that, as Christian leaders, the members of the Council begin with themselves!

The third recommendation was a very influential factor in the final development and perpetuation of his Christian community. It provided for the definite religious instruction of the young people of the city along the lines of the Calvinistic catechism. It further provided that at certain seasons all should come before the ministers to be questioned, afterwards receiving instruction in accord with the individual capacity of each.[3] Calvin's individual emphasis is worthy of note as indicating a sound pedagogical understanding and an attitude of justice in not requiring from anyone a knowledge beyond his powers of acquiring.

Since these measures were made applicable to all residents of Geneva, it became a case of "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."[4] Everyone must be a declared Calvinist or a declared

(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.186
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.188
(3) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.188
(4) Joshua 24:15

Catholic.The latter had no recourse but to leave the city as the declared Protestant element was to be kept within the fold by the measures outlined above.While there had been civil control of individual conduct long before the arrival of Calvin,he made two distinct contributions:the appointment of lay inspectors who should work with the ministry,and,a very important innovation,he made the work of the inspectors an ecclesiastical instead of a civil function.

c. His exile

At first,Calvin seemed to be making progress in enforcing his demands.It was a dangerous experiment in a city where one's religious affiliations were so apt to be in line with political expediency and where the individual love of freedom was so strong as it had been shown to be in Geneva.The city election of February 1538,was a sweeping victory for those who opposed Calvin's drastic and repressive changes.After the installation of the newly elected officials,innumerable steps were taken to harass and hinder the reformers.It was voted that the Supper should be refused to no one; that the ministers should confine themselves to preaching and take no part in politics;and that the form of the church ritual be changed.This last was done entirely by civil authority without even a pretence of consulting the ministers who were to conduct the ritual. Each of these decisions in itself struck at the root of all the attempted reforms.Taken together,they did away with ecclesiastical independence in even the most limited degree and made the church subservient to the state.These things could not be tolerated by Calvin,who had been forbidden to preach until he would conform in all matters with the civil decrees.On Easter,1539,he refused to administer the Communion because,in accord with his stated prin-

ciple of making it a deeply spiritual service,he felt the people were in far too controversial a state of mind to enter properly into the spirit of the service.Within the next few days the Little Council met and also the Council of Two Hundred.Calvin and Farel,and their associate Corand,were ordered to leave the city.(1) Thus Calvin's first period of work in Geneva came to an abrupt end.He had been most reluctant to undertake it but,having begun the work,he had put all his abilities into it.Had he been a bit older or possessed of some slight degree of tact,he would probably have "made haste slowly." But he had acted throughout in accord with his conscience and had in no case demanded from others a more stringent observance of the dictates of the church than he was willing to yield himself.Thus he left the city deeply wounded. At the same time,true to his interpretation of the divine plan,he felt that his dismissal from Geneva was as truly sent from God as his call to serve there had been.His work had never had any but the noblest aims and his apparent failure carried with it no sting of disgrace.

3. Calvin's great years

a. His recall to Geneva

As Farel had been the human instrumentality in securing Calvin's services for Geneva in 1536,it seemed but fitting that he should play the same role in 1540 when he was asked to return.The Little Council and the Council of Two Hundred,which had expelled him, now voted his return and sent him a message asking that he once again undertake the religious leadership of the city.This changed attitude on the part of the government was due to the continued political turbulence;to military danger from without which showed

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.206-211

the need of unity within;to an attempt by the Catholic Church to induce Geneva to return to papal allegiance;and to the desperately lax religious and moral life of most of the residents.

The call to return was infinitely more repugnant to Calvin than the call to remain had been.Only Farel's promised curse had indicated to Calvin his duty in 1536.So in 1540,he could not bring himself to believe that a return - the possibility of which he had often mentioned as the cross he most greatly dreaded - was his duty,until Farel again made him feel it was God's task for him.(1) Feeling this,(2) personal desires were permitted to play no part. God's will was his law and he tried not only to make others obey it but to obey it himself,implicitly.In the fall of 1541 he entered the city once more and began immediately on his work.The purpose of his return,as he saw it,was to form a model Christian community under church control.The civil authorities were thoroughly tired of the disaffection continually breaking out in riots and minor disorders within the city;and felt,too,the inadequacy of the religious leaders who had been called during Calvin's absence.

b. His increasing authority

As a result of these things,the government was disposed to treat him well.It assumed the expense of his moving to Geneva from Strassburg;it provided him with a house and garden;voted him a salary and a certain allotment of produce;and prepared to cooperate with him.(3)

His first act was to draw up,in collaboration with a civil committee,a set of Ordinances for governing the city.They were

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.258
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.262
(3) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.264

essentially the same as the Articles described previously.These Ordinances were accepted by the Little Council and by the Council of Two Hundred,with a few changes tending to keep the control of the church in the hands of the state;Their purposes were as follows: to give a measure of self-government to the church while maintaining helpful relations with the state;and to put into effect some spiritual discipline whereby the church might control the initiation of its members and their maintenance in right doctrine and right living.(1)

The Ordinances declared that Christ instituted four offices:pastor,teacher or doctor,elder,and deacon.Since the development of the model community depended on the parts played by these four,it will be necessary to give them a brief consideration here.

The duties of the pastor were to preach,to admonish in public and private,and to administer the sacraments,assisted by the elders.After an examination as to doctrinal soundness,they were admitted to the ministry by their fellow ministers and approved by the government.It was further decreed that they were to meet weekly for Scriptural study and discussion.If any contention arose within their ranks which they could not settle,the matter was to be taken to the magistrates,thus making the city government the final court of appeal.The ministers thus provided were of far greater influence and aid in the city than would appear from their restricted rights.(2)

The second office mentioned was that of teacher.Calvin believed absolutely in the development of the school system because, in order to profit from a study of the Bible,one must know languages and worldly science.At the head of the school was a master under the

(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.266
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.270

control of the ministry."In Calvin's judgment,the school was an integral factor in the religious development of the community."(1)

The duties of the elders were highly important.This phase of the Ordinances shows a marked advance over the ideas of the Articles.The office of elder was that of the chief disciplinary officer,and was lay,not clerical.The Little Council was to choose twelve elders,in consultation with the ministers,who must be approved by the Council of Two Hundred.This meant that there was no popular share in their election.These twelve elders and the ministry of the city formed the Consistory,which was the very heart of Calvin's disciplinary method.It was in the relation of the power of the Consistory to that of the government that Calvin met his severest struggle.He succeeded in establishing an independent church government with definite rights up to,and including,excommunication.The Consistory exercised a moral and corrective power which extended from distinctly religious life into civil affairs and family life as well. It had control over reprimands,penances,public apologies on one's knees,and excommunication.(2) Any punishment beyond excommunication was to be determined upon and administered by the magistrates.Thus did the state indicate its reluctance to permit the passage of supreme power into the hands of the church.The Consistory exercised its authority over all the members of the church.Since the members of the church included all baptized residents of a given territory, and since all residents had to be baptized Protestants or leave the city,the Consistory exercised its authority over all the members of the community.Thus the state was to a large extent under church control.(3)

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.270
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.273
(3) Moeller,Wilhelm. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,p.181

"The Christian life in Calvin's conception.....is one of dependence on the training and repressing power of the church." (1) Calvin taught that an error in faith was as truly contrary to divine law as an error in conduct,and that it was the duty of the church and state together to make men conform to this divine law.

The fourth office with which the Ordinances were concerned was that of deacon.These were chosen in the same way as the elders and were charged with the care of the poor and served as trustees of the hospital which,in Geneva,provided refuge for widows and orphans as well as for the sick.Begging was prohibited by law.

In the years immediately following his recall,Calvin was the most influentual man in the city.His scholarship and theological opinions won the respectful attention of Protestant leaders everywhere.His legal training was of great value both to the civil authorities and to the furtherance of his own purposes when asked to serve,as frequently happened,on some committee charged with constitutional revision or other civil matters.In addition to the foregoing reasons,his opponents found him a most difficult man to combat because of his undeviating purpose and iron will,which coerced the reluctant and recalcitrant into submission.For Calvin, only the one true faith was to be tolerated in Geneva.Those who departed from this faith were regarded as heretics and were to be punished as traitors.The dangers of his position were that not all would accept his principle of Scriptural authority for the complete control of life;or that,accepting it,they would disagree with his interpretation. (2)

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.273
(2) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.279
Moeller,Wilhelm. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,p.182-183

c. The final control of the state by the church

From 1546 until 1555, Calvin's life was crowded to the utmost with literary and executive work. At the same time he was hampered by ill health, although refusing to yield to bodily ailments. A source of great annoyance and delay in the complete execution of his programme was the lack of sympathy with the provisions of the Ordinances on the part of many of his ministers. Finally the entire ministry was summoned to appear one by one. After a brief questioning, those who felt they were not in accord with his views were removed to outlying districts. Thus the Genevan ministry was heart and soul with Calvin in the campaign for morality, and the true faith moved forward with more certainty. "Calvin's feeling was that of a general in battle rather than that of a pastor toward a suffering flock."(1) Such a feeling would, to some extent, explain his attitude toward Servetus. Servetus, deemed a heretic by Calvin, was supported by the latter's enemies who took their stand with him not from any religious belief, but because they would gladly have joined forces with anyone opposing Calvin. The death of the heretic, greatly strengthened Calvin's position. His personal and religious stand was vindicated and his political influence gained weight since his opponents had compromised themselves very completely by supporting the heretic. At the opening of the year 1555 the church became religiously independent of, and superior to, the state, being granted the power of excommunication without interference of any kind whatsoever by the civil authorities. This was effected by a vote of the Little Council and the Council of Two Hundred that the Ordinances be abided by. Thus Calvin's struggles eventuated in victory and "The

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.288

cornerstone of the Genevan ecclesiastical system was at last firmly laid."[1] Calvin had won, not only on paper but in human life. He had achieved not only the <u>right</u> to enforce his beliefs but also their actual enforcement.

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(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.345

CHAPTER II. A CONSIDERATION OF RECREATION AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE

II. A Consideration of Recreation as a Factor in the Development of Life

A. Recreation defined in general

Before any topic can be discussed profitably,there must be a mutually accepted definition of the subject matter.Before we can talk about recreation as a factor in developing human life,we must determine what we mean by recreation.For the purpose of this paper we shall accept the definition given in the introduction:recreation is an activity or occupation so absorbing that it enables the individual to step out of the routine of life temporarily,and to gain, for the time being,relaxation or freedom from responsibility.

It has been said that a letter carrier's idea of a holiday is to walk with a fellow letter carrier around his route.Recreation, for him,is doing the same thing in a different environment.Many a man who thinks he has no time for golf or fishing actually prefers the research reading or the intriguing experiment with which he fills his leisure time and which takes him out of himself.Thus for some people recreation might be a continuation of work under different circumstances;it might be extreme physical exertion;it might be moral excess;or it might be the wholesome pursuits which actually re-create.

B. Recreation as indulged in by the majority of Calvin's contemporaries

1. Its form of appeal

a. In masses

Unfortunately,none of the writers of the sixteenth century has left a definition of what the current,popular conception of recreation was;none,that is,which the writer has found.Our deductions must be based on what records we have of the activities and

pursuits with which the people of that time filled the hours not occupied with daily labor - whether that labor were mental or physical.Man is gregarious and consequently recreation is largely a social affair.Hence an idea of the structure of social life might give some insight into the kinds of diversions indulged in by the people of those days.

Professor Huizinga,of the University of Leiden,thus describes the close of the fifteenth century:

> "The contrast between suffering and joy, between adversity and happiness,appeared more striking (than now).All experiences had yet to the minds of men the directness and absoluteness of the pleasure and pain of child life.....calamities and indigence were more afflicting than at present;.....illness and health presented a more striking contrast;the cold and darkness of winter were more real evils.Honors and riches were relished with greater avidity and contrasted more vividly with surrounding misery..... All things presenting themselves to the mind in violent contrasts and impressive forms,lent a tone of excitement and passion to everyday life and tended to produce that perpetual oscillation between despair and distracted joy,between cruelty and tenderness,which characterize life in the Middle Ages". (1)

The entire tenor of life was violent.Life was lived on an emotional plane and from lord to peasant,people craved excitement and violent and affecting emotion.They enjoyed the religious processions which often wound through the streets,day after day, for weeks.They flocked to see the gorgeous display of arms and liveries of the great civil or ecclesiastical lords,even though this very display aroused their envy and fear.They enjoyed the publicity attendant on marriages and funerals with their accom-

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(1) Huizinga,J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES,p.2-3

panying processions,songs and music.And certainly they enjoyed the almost ceaseless executions.(1)

> "At Brussels,a young incendiary and murderer is placed in the center of a circle of burning fagots and straw, and made fast to a stake by means of a chain running round an iron ring. He addresses touching words to the spectators,'and he so softened their hearts that everyone burst into tears and his death was commended as the finest that ever was seen." (2)

A nationally beloved form of recreation in France was the drama.This persisted through revolutions,wars and changing dynasties.The productions took place in public squares,in royal halls,in baronial palaces - in every possible and impossible place.Frequently,the performances were given by bands of strolling players and took the form of farces which were "satirical pieces, pictures of society always most amusing and not infrequently very objectionable."(3) They rediculed everything and everybody,including the pope and the king.They showed no respect for anyone's actions or motives;there was no vestige of reverence for anything - not even for that which was holy.(4)

b. Individually or in small groups

Since the preceding illustrations indicate the recreations of people in large groups,or masses,we are by no means surprised to find that the same kind of thing filled the leisure hours of individuals or small groups.One looks to the youth of every nation to ascertain not only the present trend of its life,but to determine,almost certainly,the type of its activities and diversions

(1) Huizinga,J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES,p.3
(2) Huizinga,J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES,p.3
(3) Masson,Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE,p.334
(4) Masson,Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE,p.334-336

in the years immediately succeeding. Have we any clear cut picture of the life of the young men of the sixteenth century?

H. de Vere Stacpoole, in his life of Francois Villon, paints a vivid word picture of the recreational phase of the life of a university student about 1450. Granting this student fifty or sixty years of life after his university days are finshed, we would reach the approximate time of Calvin's birth. We have no reason to assume any change for the better by the time Calvin went to Paris. We have, in fact, every reason to assume the contrary. Such a change could only have been the result of so intense and significant a movement as to have been reflected in contemporary writings. Since this is not the case, we are justified in assuming that the following description holds true for the early years of the sixteenth century in Paris. If it is true for Paris then it may be considered true for all the nation for "Paris was then, as now, an epitome of the life of France."(1) The description tells in no uncertain terms the kind of things to which these students turned for recreation.

> "There is no denying the fact that few modern men have found themselves so free to do evil as the students of Paris found themselves in the years that stretch between 1431 and 1464, and very few modern men have ever found evil so handy and waiting to be dealt with.
>
> We have seen the students pouring through the streets of the university on their way to schools or to the celebration of some festival. The obverse of that picture is to be found in the streets of the Cité and the Ville when night is falling on Paris.
>
> Then, in the old streets of the town..... you will find these same students prowling like like wolves, singly or in small bands.
>
> I have said that there were four thousand taverns in Paris (according to Guilbert de Metz) but that does not give us a true

(1) Evans, Joan. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE, p.75

estimate of the drinking capacity of the city.....

Nightfall in this city of hard drinkers gave the university element its chance.The streets were unlit after curfew except for a glimmer here and there before a shrine;the police.....were as hard drinkers as the rest of the inhabitants and as venal as police have ever been;and,though the curfew snuffed out the lights of the city,we may be sure it left the lamps burning in the drink shops.

(here follow certain regulations concerning the part of the city in which undesirable women may make their homes)

But ordonnances were made to be broken, as these were;we find these women living in some of the best streets of the town and they undoubtedly mix with those shadows flitting about the dark old streets of Paris after nightfall,and contributing to.. .....the rows,the fights and the general diablerie of the night.

Added to these and the drink we have .....the gambling house;and,to make the trap more sure,the devil had fixed the gambling houses in the taverns.

The ordonnances forbade gambling;more, they forbade games,even the jeu de paume - a great great grandfather of our rackets.But the ordonnances did not stop gambling.

Cards and dice were the chief games.....

As surely as gravity holds the earth to the sun,so surely these disreputable taverns held the worst characters of Paris and attracted to the company of those characters men who,without this fatal attraction,might have been fairly honest,if not good." (1)

Besides the diversions so vigorously pictured above, many students had still another form of recreation.The Coquillards formed a secret society whose headquarters were at Paris but whose ramifications spread throughout France.(2)

"It was a large business with as many departments as a New York store,and,to extend the simile,its chief aim and object was to make money.Coining,burglary,highway robberry,selling indulgences and false

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(1) Stacpoole,H.de Vere. FRANCOIS VILLON,p.44-47
(2) Stacpoole,H.de Vere. FRANCOIS VILLON,p.47

> jewellery,card sharping and dice playing with loaded dice,were chief among its industries.
>
> But if you fancy that the Coquillards were pure and simple robbers.....you will fall short of the truth.Their aim was pleasure." (1)

Such then was one phase of student life of the fifteenth century.In a day when the church wielded so absolute and despotic a power over her children,how could these things be?The answer may be found in observing the occupations of the nuns and the clergy when not engaged in the duties of their offices.We are told that a fountain cannot send forth at the same time,sweet water and bitter.(2) Neither can moral restraint issue from an immoral source.The church set a bad example to the people as is shown by the following incidents.(3)

> "A startling piece of impudence is recorded of .....Agricola,who received the news that his concubine had given birth to a son on the very day when he was elected abbot. 'Today I have twice become a father.God's blessing on it!' said he." (4)
>
> .....
>
> "The subject of drink brings up a lady,l'Abbesse de Port Royal des Champs, otherwise known as l'Abbesse de Pourras.. .....This lady casts a lurid light on the social life of the time.Every house of wickedness knew her;she drank like a man, dressed like a man and lived like a beast.Descended from a high family, there were very few crimes she had left uncommitted..... I say this lady casts a lurid light on the social conditions of her day,not because she drank and swore and lived like a harlot and turned the religious house of which she was head into a brothel,actually taking payment at the door,but because she did these things openly,because she

(1) Stacpoole,M.de Vere. FRANCOIS VILLON,p.48
(2) James 3:11
(3) Masson,Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE,p.341
(4) Huizinga,J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES,p.143

> was grumbled about and not instantly suppressed.
>
> A woman like this is of more value to the historian than all the parchments in his desk. The fact that she lived and was let live is a blood red score under all I have written to demonstrate the miasma in the air of the Paris of 1430 to 1464." (1)

2. Its effect on human life

When a nation universally indulges itself in such pursuits as have been outlined in the last few pages, the result on the lives of those participating can be nothing but debasing. When people regard all the crimes on the docket as affording recreation and relaxation, of a kind, they are necessarily a degraded a people. They had no strong sense of right and wrong.(2) While this lack may have been partly the cause of the existing conditions in the line of amusements, it was also, beyond doubt, a result of them. When the objects and images of religious faith and veneration become degraded and lose the spiritual significance they are intended to convey, then comes spiritual and moral disaster. "All that is meant to stimulate spiritual consciousness is reduced to appaling common place profanity, to a startling worldliness in other-worldly guise."(3) That this was, indeed, a result of the current forms of recreation is shown by the careless and coarse mingling of the sacred and profane in their so-called religious observances. Professor Huizinga tells us "It occasionally happened that indulgences figured among the prizes of a lottery"(4) and Stacpoole says "crossing themselves with their tongues in their cheeks"(5) was customary. Even a pilgrimage, supposed to be a devoutly religious undertaking for a holiday, had

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(1) Stacpoole, H. de Vere. FRANCOIS VILLON, p.238
(2) Nasson, Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE, p.331
(3) Huizinga, J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES, p.136
(4) Huizinga, J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES, p.140
(5) Stacpoole, H. de Vere. FRANCOIS VILLON, p.111

suffered the to-be-expected result of popular laxity.

> "On festal days.....the people go to distant churches,not so much to redeem a pledge of pilgrimage as to give themselves up to pleasure.Pilgrimages are the occasions of all kinds of debauchery; procuresses are always found there,people go for amorous purposes." (1)

It is quite unnecessary to consider more specific instances showing the result on the life of the people of their pernicious and vicious forms of recreation.They came to regard any trick,any action,as quite all right,in fact deserving of praise, if it were cleverly executed.(2) One great need of the times was for recreations which would be truly re-creating and not debasing, debilitating,demoralizing and degrading.

C. Recreation as engaged in by Calvin

1. In student days

We have no very definite account of John Calvin's recreations when he was a student in Paris.However,we may safely conclude that,had there been anything of a derogatory nature in his life there,the enemies of his later years would surely have unearthed it and used it as a weapon against him.We turn then to his life in Orleans when he was older and quite free from the watchful eye of his uncle.Here we should get out first real glimpse of what constituted Calvin's idea of recreation.While not yet an avowed protester against Catholic uses and abuses,we have seen that undoubtedly Calvin had begun to think along distinctly religious lines and to formulate his own view of life.The truest indications of a man's nature are the things which he does when he thinks himself quite unobserved. Orleans had the reputation of being a delightful and rather easy

(1) Huizinga,J. WANING OF THE MIDDLE AGES,p.145
(2) Masson,Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE,p.331

going place of study.[1] Therefore, by noting how Calvin regulated his life when left more or less to his own devises, we can arrive at some idea of what recreation meant for him. We can discover with what things he filled his leisure hours. When we set out to do this the most that we can find is that night after night after night, he studied until midnight and woke early to recall the facts learned the preceding evening. It was in Orleans, too, that much of his leisure was absorbed in the study of Greek with Wolmar.[2] Calvin could not have been opposed to popular forms of recreation from a sour-grapes attitude. He was socially of the upper middle class, with sufficient funds to enable him to enter the family of a nobleman and to share the education of his children.[3] Hence he had sufficient leisure to gratify his own ideas of recreation. It is significant of his view of life and of the kind of recreation he permitted himself that "he regarded anything that took him from his studies with impatience."[4]

2. In maturity

"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined". As the student Calvin had no time nor appetite for current amusements, so the mature man shows a corresponding austerity of life.

The things he found time for in his life besides his work and his God, were his friends and the out-of-doors. We are told that when he returned to Paris in 1551, his visits of greeting to all his friends filled four whole days.[5] We have a charming account of a letter Calvin received from his friend, Jacques de Bourgogne, in which Jacques asked John to secure a house for him in Geneva. It is

(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.48
(2) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.48-49
(3) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, vol.1, p.42
(4) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.52
(5) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.55

quite evident from Calvin's reply that he took time and pains in the fulfilment of this commission. He finally wrote that at last the house had been secured and that he had chosen it, not for its convenience of arrangement or its spacious rooms, but because of the possibilities of the garden. He spoke especially of "la belle vue pour l'ete."(1) Arguing from this we assume that he would be fully as concerned about his own garden, says Doumergue. Nature was to him a mirror of God in which even the most ignorant should be able to recognize the Creator.(2) If he felt thus about it, we may be sure that time spent in his garden was recreation for him. The enjoyment of the out-of-doors must have provided a means for him to escape temporarily from the routine of his daily life. His garden must many times have afforded him a welcome relief.

Besides the companionship of his adult friends, Calvin enjoyed that of children.

> "He loved children and had them at his house for Christmas trees but (and this is characteristically French) always addressed them with a ceremonious politeness as if they were grown men and women deserving of as much consideration as himself." (3)

The combination of a Christmas tree, children, and a man who loved them, brings at once to our minds a happy time in which the host would inevitably forget weightier matters and enjoy the recreation which he and the children provided for each other.

One of the forms of popular recreation, especially among those who fancied themselves as writers of prose, was the fashion of meeting for the purpose of telling stories and questionable anecdotes.(4)

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(1) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, vol.3, p.528
(2) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, vol.3, p.529
(3) Lindsay, Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION, p.154
(4) Masson, Gustave. MEDIAEVAL FRANCE, p.331

With this,of course,Calvin had no sympathy.But he was not averse to a joke in itself.He held this theory.He said that a man who wants to make use of jokes i.e. "facetiousness," must be on his guard against two vices.First,lest he lack restraint and become too long-winded,producing in his auditors what Calvin called frozen smiles. Second,he must decline absolutely to make a dissolute joke,one which in Latin is called "scurrilité" in our language,"plaisanterie." Doumergue enlarges on this somewhat,saying that Calvin is shown to be opposed to "plaisanterie" but not to "facétie", and that it is quite possible to understand how a misapprehension has brought about a change in these words through the intervening centuries. (1)

We see then that Calvin did not forego recreation.It found a place in his life,but it was not the kind of recreation indulged in by the majority of his contemporaries nor did it occupy so large a portion of his time as did theirs.There must be a reason for the kind and amount of recreation which he permitted himself, and in chapter three this reason will be shown.

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(1) Doumergue,E. JEAN CALVIN, vol.3,p.538

CHAPTER III. THE PLACE OF RECREATION IN CALVIN'S VIEW OF LIFE, WITH A CONTRIBUTING BACKGROUND OF CONTEMPORANEOUS RECREATIONAL LIFE

III. The Place of Recreation in Calvin's View of Life, with a Contributing Background of Contemporaneous Recreational Life

A. Recreation for Calvin's contemporaries: the unrestrained expression of human desire

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, recreation was merely indulgence of desire without regard for its effect on society or on the individual. The illustrations cited in chapter two have made this clear. The excesses into which the people were led by a general breaking down of religious ideals and by the harsh contrast of superabundant luxury with direst poverty, were based on a purely instinctive reaction. There was a complete lack of any plan for the self-regulation of life. If an activity enabled an individual to step out of the routine of life temporarily and to gain, for the time being, relaxation or freedom from responsibility, this activity was seized upon with avidity and indulged in freely. Everyone desired to forget, whenever possible, the malaise or misery of his own particular situation. This was especially true of the middle and lower classes, whose lives became increasingly unbearable as they descended in the social scale, and who composed, of course, the major portion of the population.

While Calvin, as a student, did not participate in the prevailing type of recreation, he could not have failed to have noticed its prevalence. When Calvin, the mature scholar, was detained in Geneva to aid the forces of Protestantism, he found the city addicted to the same kind of thing. The rest of his life was spent in Geneva with the exception of a short interval at Strassburg. During these years he changed the city.

> "The strict moral commands changed into morality: Geneva became the model of a well ordered, honorable and pious community in which prosperity flour-

> ished without luxury and crime was unknown." (1)

Such a change could have been wrought only by a man of conviction and determination who had developed a definite plan for the conduct of life. Since Calvin indulged in certain forms of recreation, let us see what relationship existed between his plan of life and the recreations he permitted.

II. Recreation for Calvin:
only such relaxations as were Scripturally justifiable

1. Theoretically

> "The center of Calvin's philosophy was God as the Almighty Will. His will was the source of all things, of all deeds, of all standards of right and wrong and of all happiness. The sole purpose of the universe and the sole intent of the Creator, was the glorification of the Deity..... The outward sign of election to grace he (Calvin) thought was moral behavior, and in this respect he demanded the utmost from himself and his followers." (2)

Thus we see at once that the glorification of God by moral behavior is a vital part of his plan of life. But there must be some definite basis for the determination of what constituted moral behavior. For Calvin, this basis was the Bible. He says in his "Institutes",

> "God has given us his Word, infallible and inerrant, something that 'has flowed from his very mouth.....we can only seek God in his Word', he said, 'nor think of him otherwise than according to his Word.' " (3)

Therefore the recreation which he admitted as a part of life's plan must accord with the findings of Scripture.

> "Calvin insisted that nothing should remain in the church which was not justified by Scripture." (4)

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(1) Moeller, Wilhelm. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, p.184
(2) Smith, Preserved. AGE OF THE REFORMATION, p.164
(3) Smith, Preserved. AGE OF THE REFORMATION, p.165
(4) Hayes, Carlton J.H. HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE, vol.2, p.142

Hence he must have found Biblical justification for those forms of recreation in which he indulged and permitted his followers to indulge. While he never gave recreation a constructive place in his educational program, he did recognize that the average human being demanded an outlet for that something within him which could be satisfied only by a release from toil and austerity. He realized that certain physiological and psychological demands must be met. " 'As I see that we cannot forbid men all diversions.....I confine myself to those that are really bad.' " (1) At the same time, he believed that life was a sacred trust and that men, as God's stewards, must account to him for every moment of it. He reconciled these demands by permitting what his infallible guide, God's Word, permitted, according to his interpretation. Quoting from the "Institutes" Doumergue says,

> "A côté de la 'nécessité' nous devons dans la vie faire place au 'des biens terriens' et tout particulièrment de la nature. C'est un vrai devoir: 'nous ne nous pouvons abstenir des choses qui semblent lus servir à plaisir qu'à necessite.' " (2)

Since man must account for his moments, he must do nothing in any of them which is harmful or contrary to God's word. This is not so much on the individual's account as because such actions would not redound to the glory of God. More, he must not do that which is merely harmless. Recreation to be permissible must be of profit. "Profiter par le plaisir: voila Calvin." (3)

Such beliefs may sound well in theory but how will they work out in practice? To determine this, let us see what recreations

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(1) Smith, Preserved. AGE OF THE REFORMATION, p. 171
(2) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, vol. 3, p. 530
(3) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, vol. 3, p. 538

Calvin actually permitted and whether there is Scriptural justification for them.

2. Practically

Proof-texting is dangerous business. When one acknowledges the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, as Calvin did, all parts of it assume equal weight and authority. The half-pagan customs of the Old Testament and the finest spiritual teachings of the New are on the same plane in such an interpretation. One can find somewhere within the Bible a text which will justify almost any deed or course of action. Calvin, therefore, would have no difficulty in supporting the recreations he permitted. The remarkable thing is that, allowing recreation at all, he did not allow dancing which has so strong a Scriptural basis. Perhaps it was especially obnoxious to him because "at that time dances were accompanied by kisses and embraces."(1)

He allowed himself and others the very simple relaxations we noted in the previous chapter. Intercourse with his friends was chief among his recreations. We are told that he was "slow to make intimate friends but, once made, the friendship lasted for life."(2) He enjoyed his garden, his neighbor's children, and an occasional joke. He also indulged sometimes in a simple indoor table game called Clef.(3)

Moreover, in chapter six of the early form of the "Institutes" he says that an element in Christian liberty is freedom in the use of those gifts of God often called "indifferent things"; and continues,

"....nor is it anywhere forbidden to laugh

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(1) Smith, Preserved. AGE OF THE REFORMATION, p.172
(2) Lindsay, Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION, vol.2, p.154
(3) Doumergue, E. JEAN CALVIN, page ref. lost

> or to enjoy food or to add new possessions .....or to be delighted with musical harmonies or to drink wine.....that is indeed true;but.....to immerse one's self in them,to intoxicate mind and soul with present pleasures and always to seek after new delights,these are as far as possible from a proper use of the gifts of God." (1)

Singing,for instance,was not wrong in itself,but one might not indulge in the dissolute and ribald songs of the time.If one sang,the singing must not be directed to frivolous ends nor include light music.The introduction of congregational singing was an innovation and until the people became accustomed to it Calvin thought "it might be well to select children,to teach them to sing in a clear and distinct fashion in the congregation." (2)

While the list of recreations he permitted is much shorter than the list of those he did not permit,responsibility for the entire burden of curtailment can not justly be placed on Calvin's shoulders.We must remember that

> ".....every mediaeval town had its laws against extravagance in dress,in eating and in drinking,against cursing and swearing,against gaming,dances and masquerades..... Every instance quoted by modern historians to prove, as they think,Calvin's despotic interference with the details of private life, can be parallelled by reference to the police books of mediaeval towns in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." (3)

Calvin was not,therefore, introducing a new custom by securing the passage of stringent laws regulating minute details of life.He did, however,demand the enforcement of those already on the statute books and he did feel bound to pass supplementary laws.He was driven to

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(1) Walker,Williston. JOHN CALVIN,p.143-144
(2) Lindsay,Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION,vol.2,p.106
(3) Lindsay,Thomas M. HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION,vol.2,p.108

this attitude by his sense of duty and by existing conditions. The reason for his insistence on certain matters grew out of his conception of the duties of a pastor as a carer for souls. In the preface to the Genevan catechism he said

> "We certainly do not regard our office as bound in so narrow limits that when the sermon is delivered we may rest as if our task were done." (1)

As to existing modes of recreation, they cried aloud for reform. In order to combat them Calvin, in true historic fashion, inclined to the opposite extreme. Had he been able to do so it is possible that he might have eliminated all recreation. This, however, he did not do and the surmise is without real basis. We do not think it true to find, as Moeller does, that he was "the enemy of all recreation and amusement." (2) His recreation was differently defined and indulged in for a different purpose than were the popular forms. It was not an integral and vital part of his educational programme. Had it been, material concerning it would not have been so meagre. It was, rather, a concession to a fundamental human trait; it was an allowance he made because of man's weakness. His recreational programme was conspicuous for its curtailment. That it existed at all was an acknowledgment of man's physical limitations and the limitations imposed by the age in which he lived.

It is almost impossible to compare recreation as it existed before Calvin's intervention and as it was established by him. Calvin so completely reorganized all living conditions in every phase of existence that it logically followed that his scheme of recreation would be different not only in fact, but in proportion, intention and appeal. It was actually as far from existing modes of

(1) Walker, Williston. JOHN CALVIN, p.191
(2) Moeller, Wilhelm. HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, p.183

indulgence as his theological conceptions were from mediaeval Catholic veniality.

Yet in spite of these things, Calvin's view of life did permit recreation. And the recreation it permitted was in accord with the definition previously stated in this thesis.

SUMMARY

The angle from which one views an object will determine its proportions;it will also,at least to some degree,determine its desirability.

The angle from which Calvin viewed recreation was determined by his general view of life.This,in turn,was dependent upon his inheritances,his environments and his personal development.These were of such a nature that,acting and reacting upon one another,they led to an abhorrence of current religious and social practices.Internal tendencies and external circumstances forced him out of the Catholic Church,in which he had been born and raised,and into the Protestant leadership of Geneva.

Here he wrought into the life of the city his own convictions concerning the regulation of life.Because his entire theology was based on the transcendent glory of God and the abject sinfulness and dependence of man,nothing assumed large proportions in it which was of concern to man alone.

Therefore,recreation was viewed by Calvin from such an angle that it diminished almost to the vanishing point.That it did not entirely vanish was because it assumed such large proportions in the eyes of his contemporaries and because of man's inherent need of it.

Had Calvin's interpretation of Scripture been such that he could have found in it no justification for recreation,he would possibly have attempted to eliminate it from his programme.This was not the case,however,and he permitted it to a limited degree.

Recreation must not be of a pernicious nature,nor might it be merely harmless.It must be profitable and Scripturally justifiable.

Thus his attitude toward it is a positive and not a negative one and proper recreation is granted a definite place,though a minor one,in Calvin's view of life.

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